



## **NEWS: Army birthday greetings from the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff**

By Brig. Gen. Scott Legwold

The U.S. Army is the oldest of the nation's armed forces, which in total have been described as steel threads in the fabric of America. The defense of the nation has never fallen to one region or state, from the Revolutionary War to the conflicts of the 21st century. The Army has adjusted to the changes the nation has needed to confront with regard to its members, including integration of black regiments into the Union Army during the Civil War, acceptance of the Tuskegee Airmen of WWII as combat fighter pilots in the Army Air Corps and women into West Point in the 1970s.

When I was a boy in the 1960s, many of my friends, relatives, teachers, and neighbors had served in WWII and Korea. 1950s and 1960s television recalled in drama and in comedy series, the service of our WWII veterans in such shows as "Combat," "McHale's Navy," "Hogan's Heroes," "Sergeant Bilko" and "Twelve-O'clock High," all left images on our youth. Despite the anti-war sentiment and protests of the late 1960s and 1970s, these shows still inspired many to enter the active Army or one of its two reserve components in the late 1970s and 1980s at a time when the Army very much needed to correct many personnel and overall readiness challenges left by the decades and turmoil of the Vietnam War.

The Army did re-vitalize and re-invigorated itself with a commitment to professionalism and readiness, and the Army's strength in Europe arguably aided in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the conclusion of the Cold War. The Army reacted with speed and strength to engage and confront the challenges of the first Gulf War, and then the Global War on Terror, with operations in the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific.

Every one of my 10 uncles and my father served between 1941 and 1960, and I consistently looked up to them and was proud of their service. In turn, I was determined to follow in their footsteps. It was always my goal to serve in our nation's armed forces and to serve in the Army has been a great privilege. To be allowed to serve with, and then later lead, America's finest people in all of the missions our nation asks of us — be they at home or abroad — is an unparalleled honor and privilege. I will always be grateful to my country for this opportunity to serve.